

Beasts Without Borders



A Bestiary

with
Kyle Mosher

and illustrator
John Prentiss Benson

-2017-

Also by Kyle Mosher:

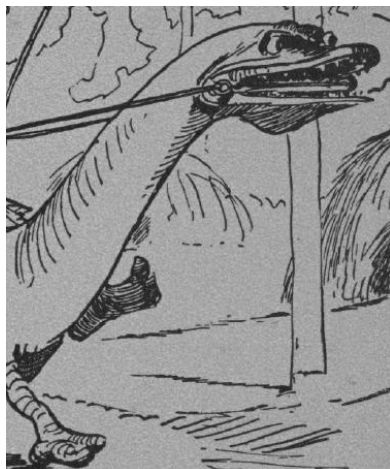
Perfect Nonsense: 215 Illustrated Limericks

Illustrations by Edward Lear

Life, Magic, Mischief: Volume 1

A collection of children's poems.

New work/poems posted at lifemagicmischief.com where you can also submit poems and illustrations.



Also by John Prentiss Benson:

The Woozlebeasts

The illustrations for *Beasts Without Borders* come from this book.

*In memory of the greatest – Godzilla.
Beast in peace.*

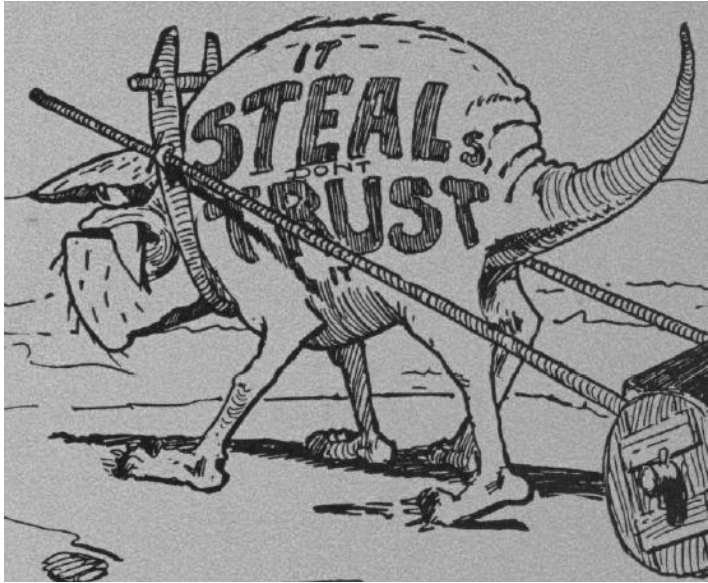


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Introduction

We kill the great beasts in the world.

Maybe we can't help it.

Maybe we can.

Beasts Without Borders is more than a book. It's a cause. A movement towards accepting all beasts, however beastly they might be. Those introduced to you here are only a few of the world's beasts. But we always need more. More of the wild and uncontrolled. We mustn't allow ourselves to become stuffy and sterile.

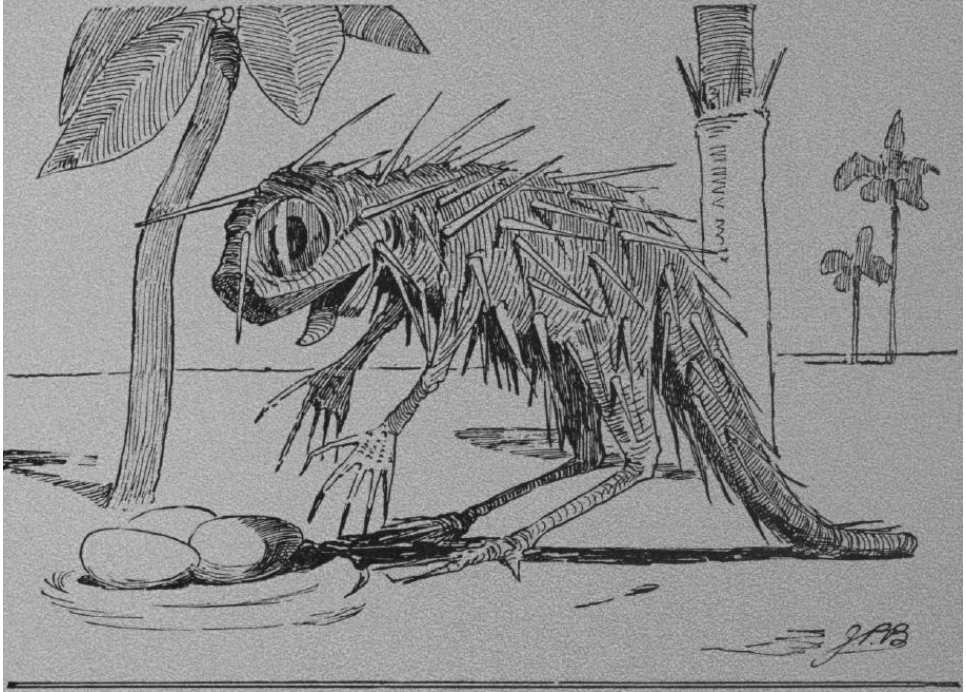
No, they're not safe. Of course not! But we're a whole lot safer because we know they're not. And we're a whole lot better off for not being so safe.

The more beasts you know the more you realize that you're not so easily tamed yourself. You are delightfully wild too!

Do these beasts deserve love? I don't know. But I love them.

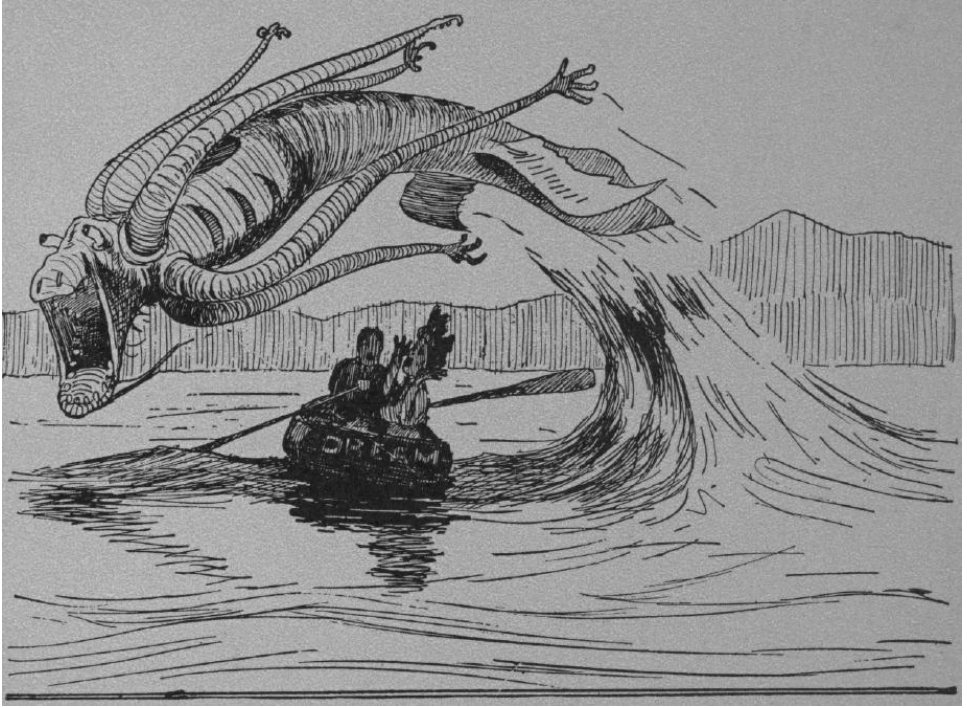
-Kyle Mosher

Gogol



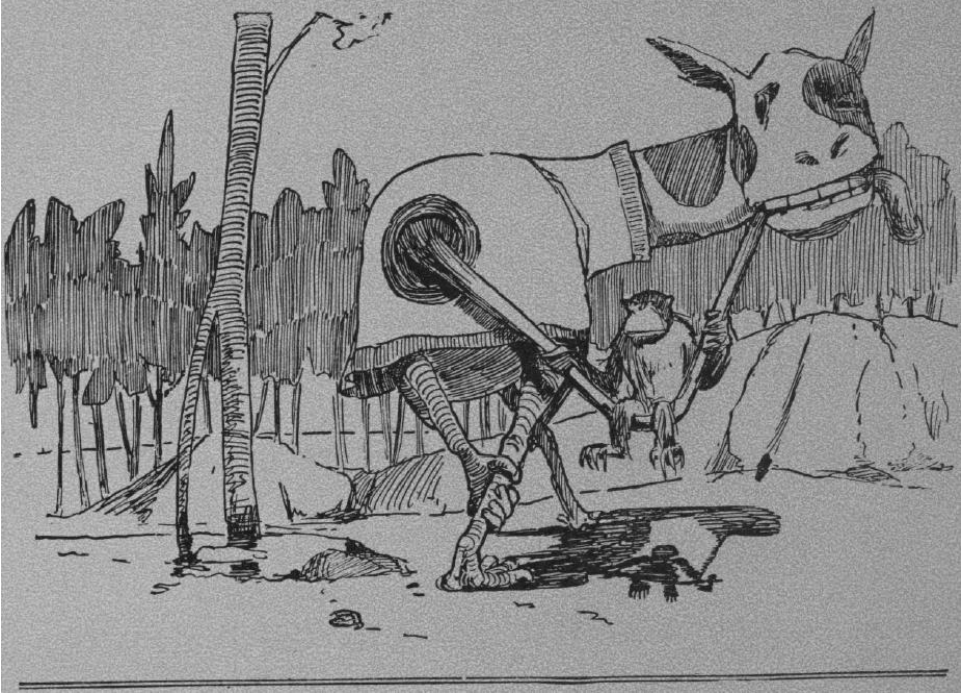
Almost everything known about the gogol is wrong (you'll find that to be a running theme in this book). Its reproductive strategy is rather unique. The "eggs" it lays are a decoy. Its spikes are also something of a façade and, yes, the two are related. Each spike is, in fact, an egg case. If another creature is silly enough to attack, it is likely to get at least one of those spines lodged in it and then ends up carrying and caring for the egg. This proves to be a good deal for the egg because anything confident enough to attack a gogol (while perhaps not the brightest) should be rather fearsome.

Kreaver



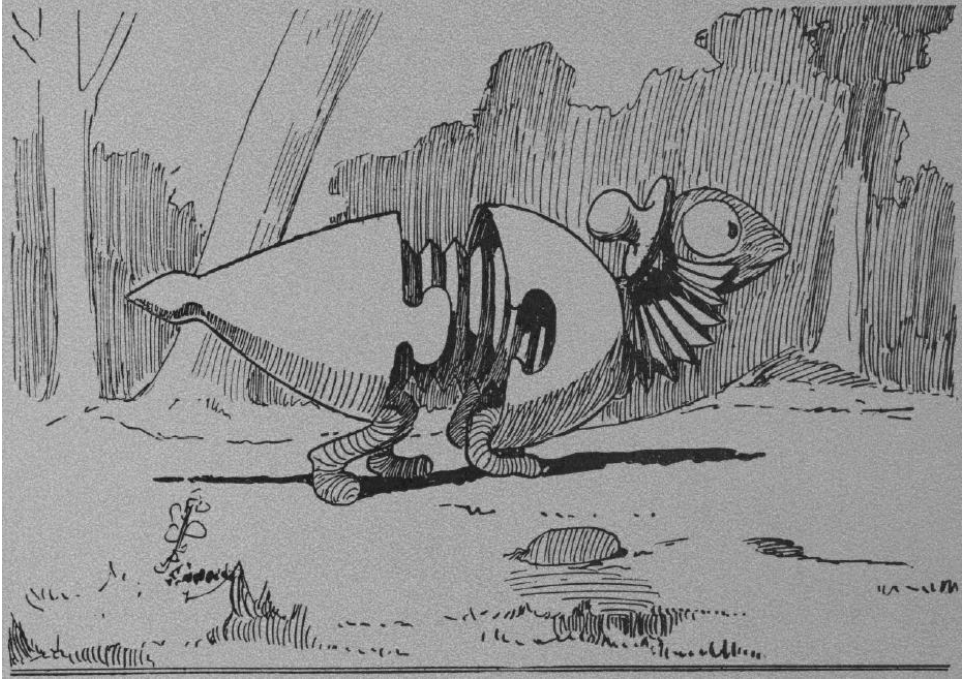
The kreaver is a poor hunter. It has had to develop numerous tentacle-like appendages in order to maximize its chances at catching prey so it can afford to miss. It is pictured here absolutely confident that it's about to feast and, per usual, entirely wrong.

Beezee



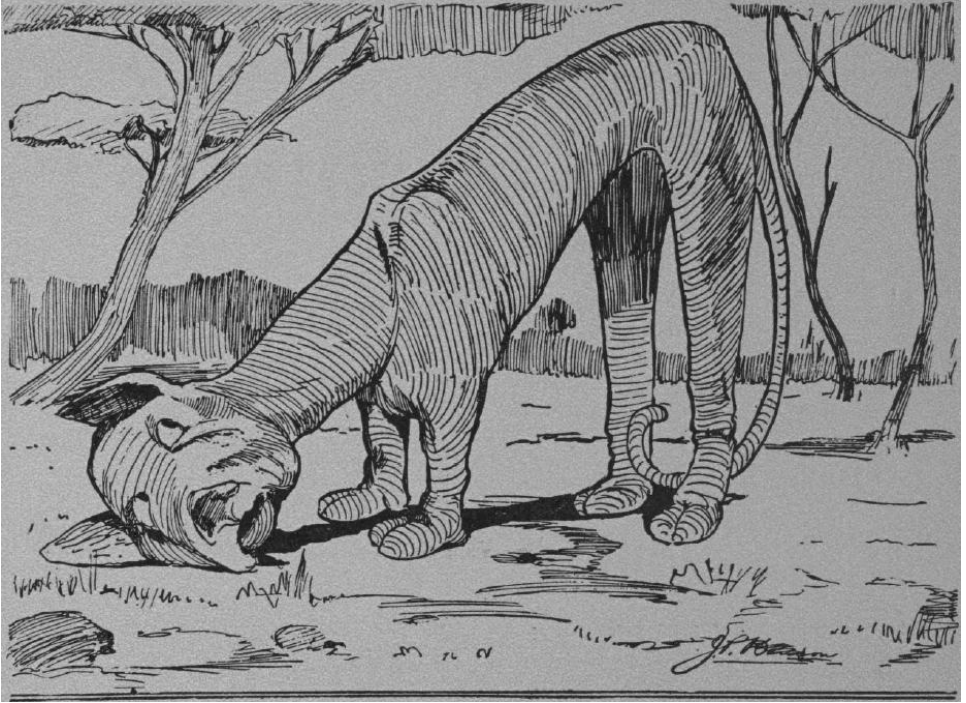
A lonely beast, the beezee collects all manner of creatures to keep it company. Yes, it will be friends with you. You might not want it to.

Scoodle



The scoodle is forever in search of what it believes to be its missing piece. It's an arthropod with an unusual exoskeleton and unknown ancestry. It is likely related to the four piece puzzle and the accordion.

Odddog



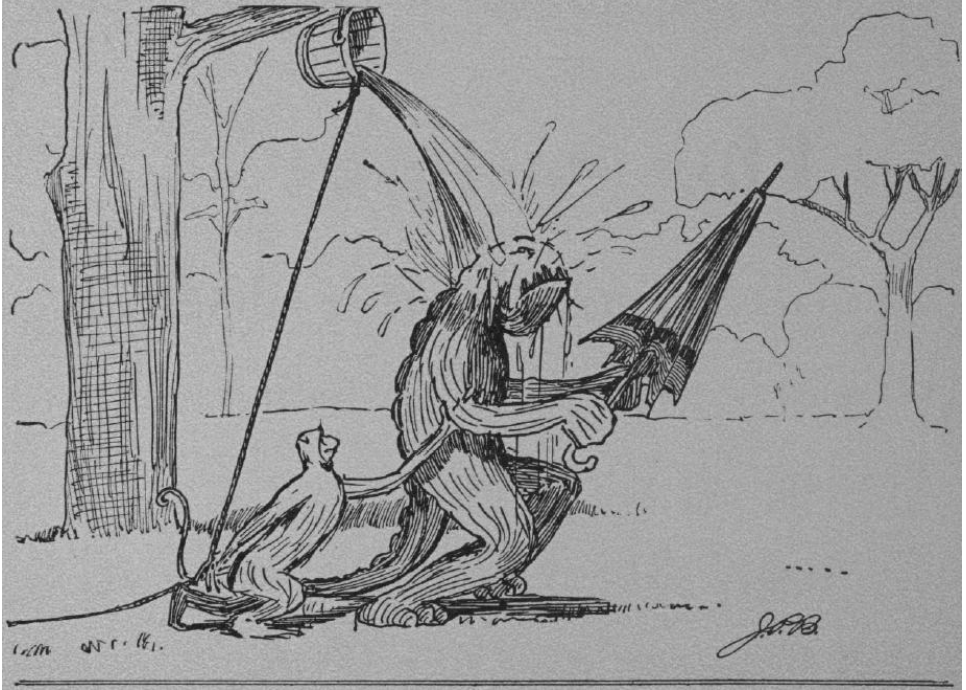
Built to burrow, the odddog's astounding senses of smell and hearing allow it to lock onto worms at depths of twenty feet or more. It can eat up to fifty pounds of worms a day. There are rumors that it's able to hear gold itself growing in the ground but refuses to go anywhere near it.

Frumpf



More than anything, the frumpf wants to be known. It paints itself in eye-catching spots, makes itself up to look fierce and insists on making a horrible racket everywhere it goes. Won't you love it?

Leotol



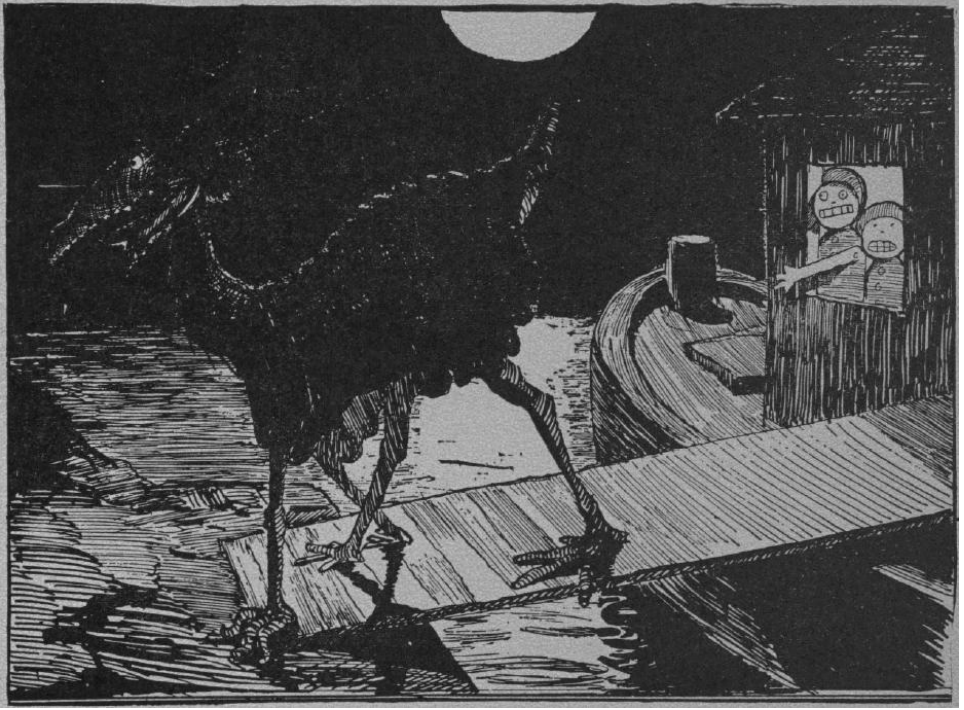
The world's only known hydrophobicphiliac – the leotol both loves and hates water. As you can see here, it will go so far as to construct a water delivery system and employ another animal to operate it because it's unsure if, when the moment comes, it will be able to pull the cord and drench itself. And it has an umbrella at the ready! A truly complex creature.

Cowrat



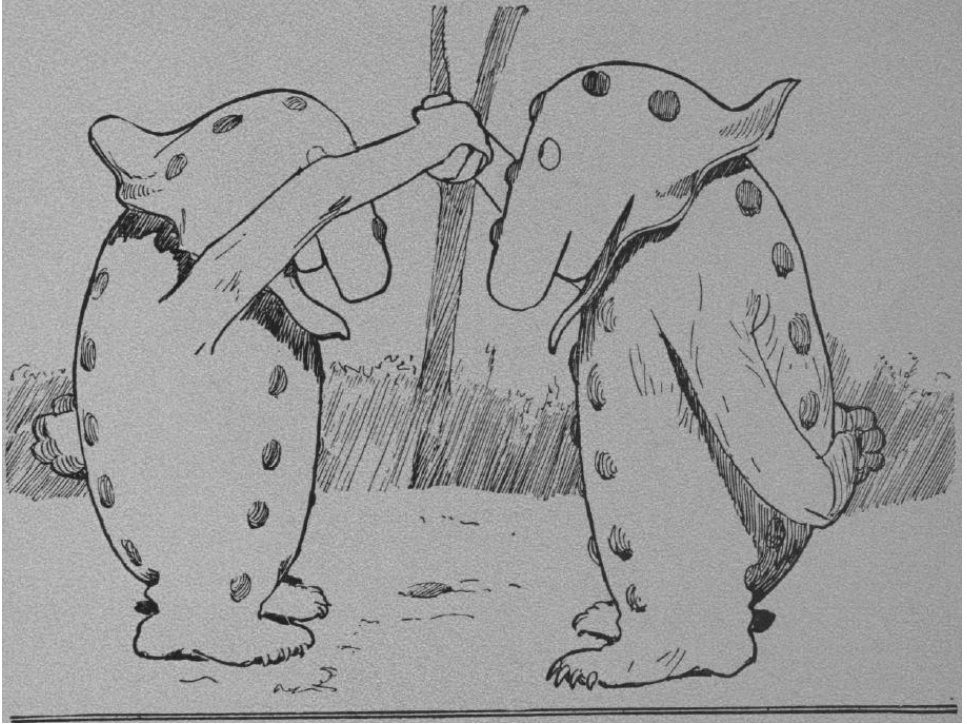
A tinkerer, the cowrat lives to discover and is always found fiddling with something. It enjoys the counterintuitive, discovering the Law of Tomfoolery (good fun) and the Preposterous Principle (that which can't be done, must). Looking up to Jonas Salk as its hero, it never patents its inventions. All are welcome to its findings.

Humptle



The humptle lives for the night sea. It writes a large amount of poetry on what the ocean has to tell to those who listen, which is mostly: “ssssrrrssssrrssssrrrrssslurpssrr.” It has a great sense for lyricism, which benefits it as a hunter because it feeds exclusively on other poets.

Speckled Dwig



Polkadotted, this natural camouflage allows the dwig to blend in easily with whimsy. It is frequently found deep in one's imagination as well as at the fringes of good taste. It's seen as prey by all predators and is even eaten by some herbivores.

Zamdillo



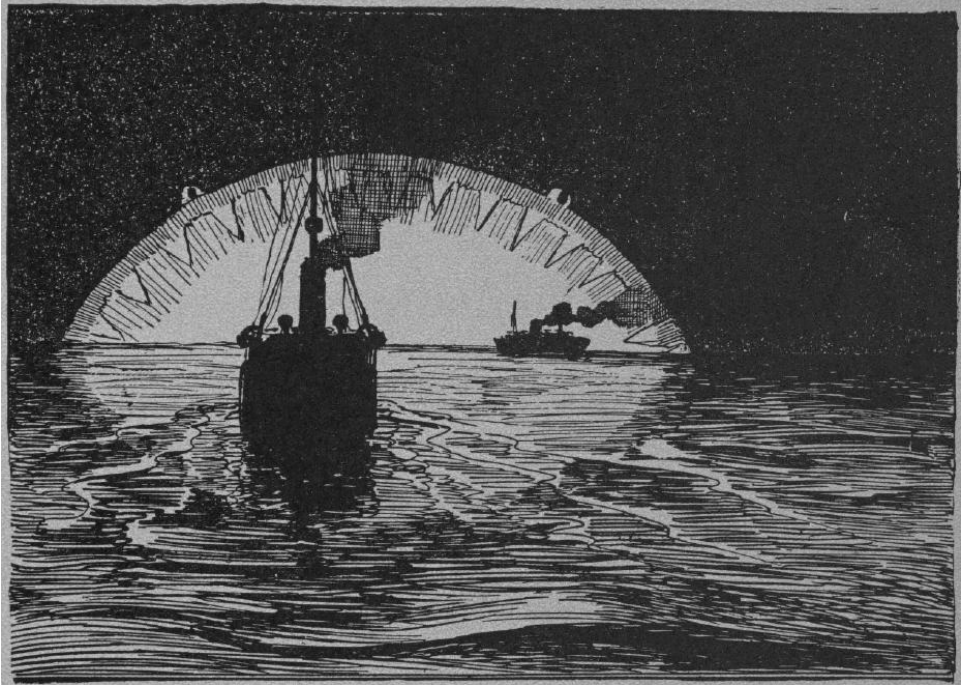
The zamdillo thrives on ice. It is large and lumbering on land but a regular winter ballerina once astride its slippery steed. It's a rare summer hibernator.

Slooch



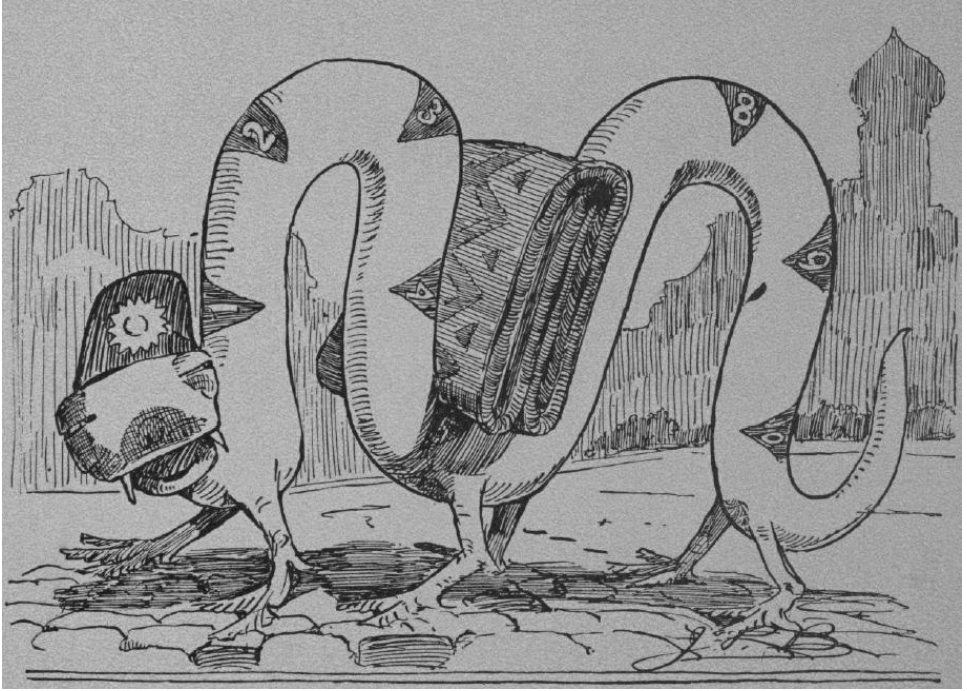
The slooch is a hard worker that enjoys dressing up and generally prefers to live in the taiga (boreal forest or snow forest). It socializes primarily with wolves, tigers, bears and zamdillos. It's a wanderer or tramp.

Karakul



Only one karakul has ever existed here. It's believed to be a comet that survived the crash to Earth. It ate the kraken and Loch Ness monster but normally feeds on whales and giant squids. It also sunk Atlantis and will occasionally eat a ship on accident but is mostly indifferent towards people.

Psh



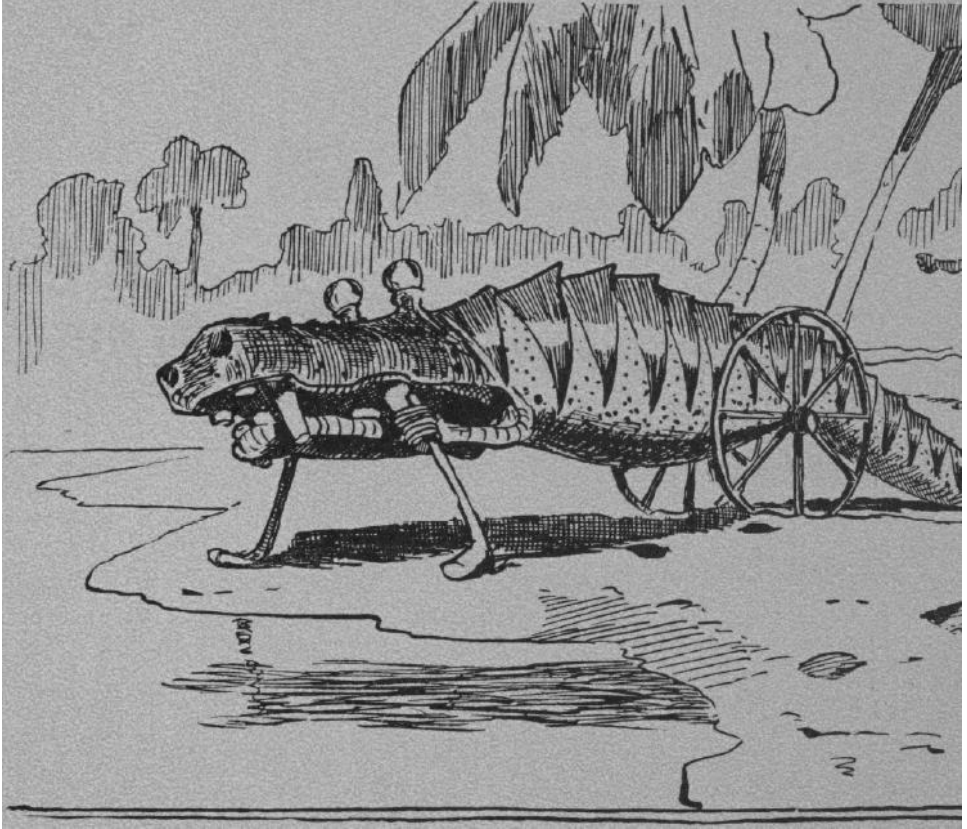
The psh has a deep appreciation for fine textiles, layering its den with many thick, colorful rugs to keep itself comfy and in good cheer. It's an incredibly venomous hunter that would be an apex predator if not for the seemingly insipid, surprisingly vicious, grudge bearing chicken.

Shurb



The shurb loves trees. It will not venture into a clearing without any sort of cover. If it can't be in a tree it is still able to derive comfort from wrapping itself around one and nibbling the bark. In a bit of reverse-parasitism (although not quite altruism) it will move into a bird nest, hatch the eggs and raise the chicks as its own just so it has an excuse to stay in the tree.

Alokin



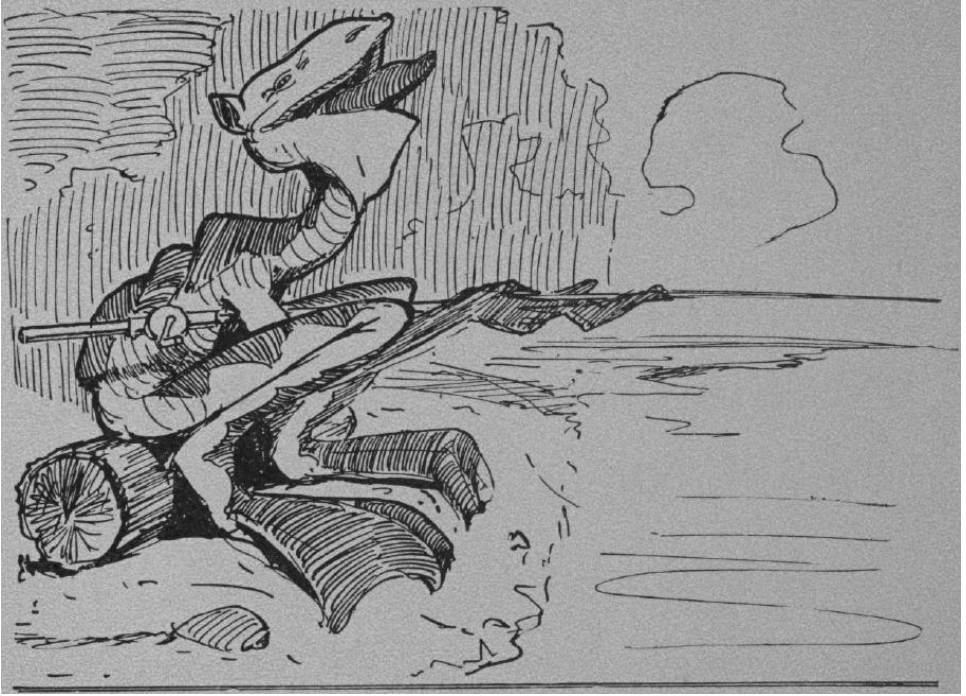
Much like the cowrat, the alokin is a tinkerer. The difference is that it came to invention out of necessity. It is unable to move without the assistance of wheels or prosthetics. It remains a mystery as to how it gets its first designs constructed and attached.

Limbet



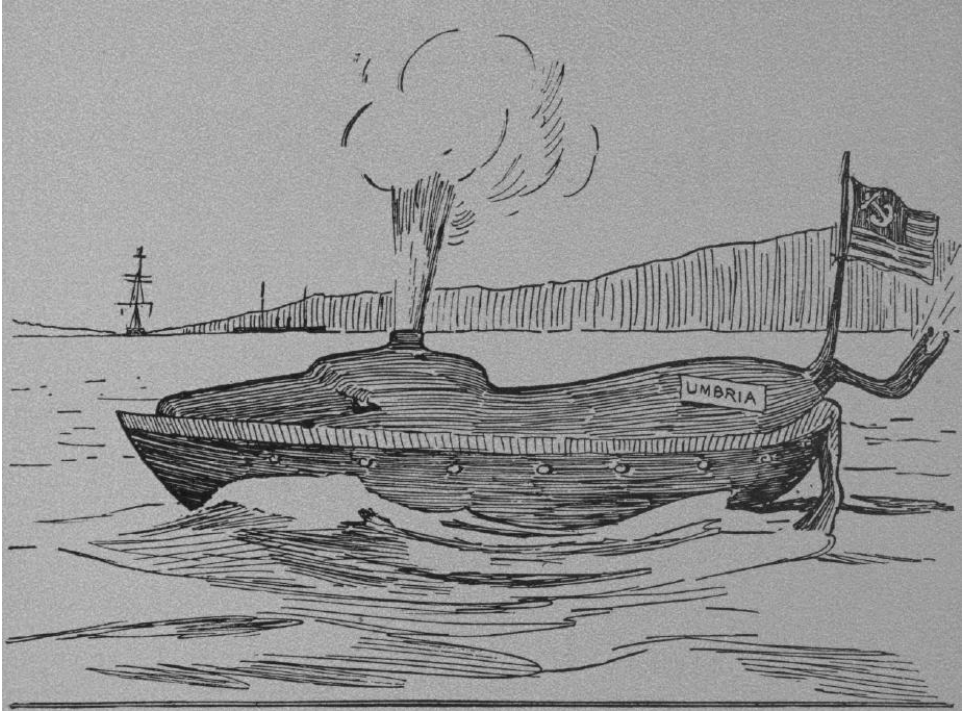
The limbet is a pessimist, a true gloom and doomer. It enjoys a good catastrophe, geeks out on bleakness, revels in hopelessness, has its whiskers set all aquiver by disaster. It's seen here observing the demise of a ship as if it were at a ballgame and its team just took the lead. Go calamity!

Skunp



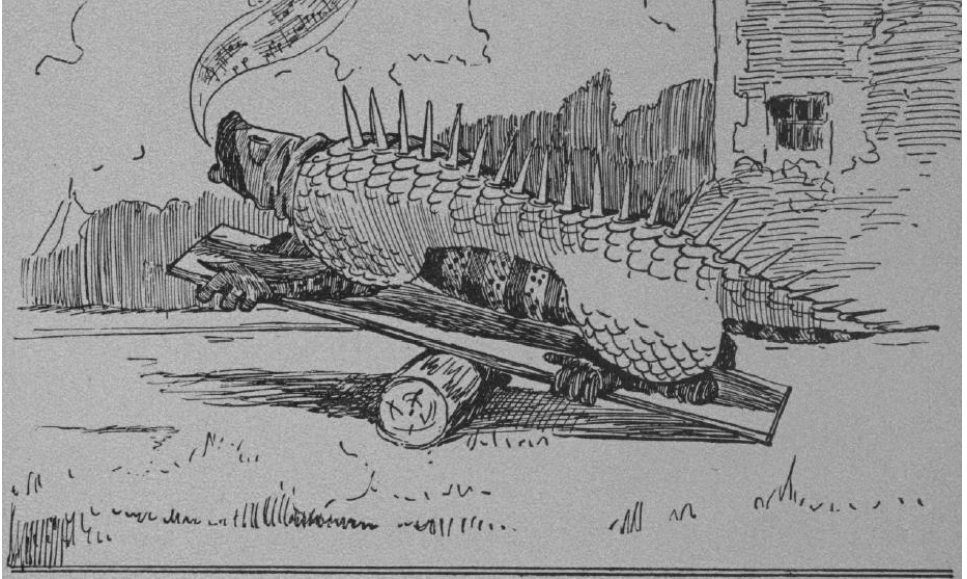
Living to fish, the skunp can rarely be convinced to do anything else. It dreams of one day catching the karakul so no one will be able to top its tale (though it knows that, true or not, someone always has a bigger story).

Hamshoo



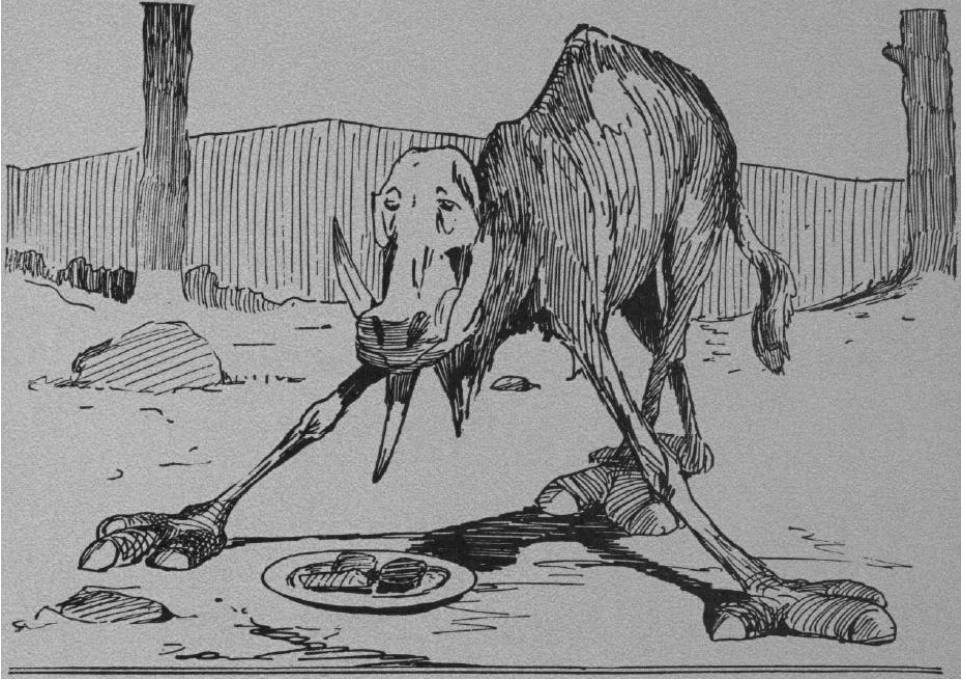
The hamshoo is the creature that the skunp actually catches most of the time and always throws back in disgust. It hopes to be a ship one day but is most often confused for a bloated duck.

Trex



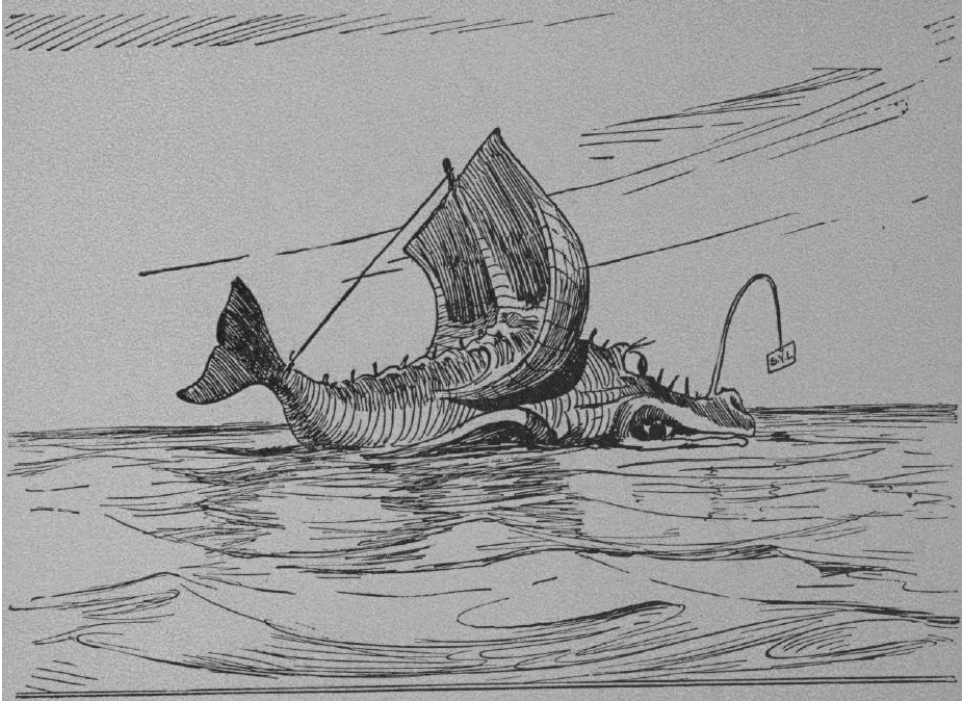
The trex is made to play. Sadly, due to its fierce appearance, parents are reluctant to allow their children near it. This results in a lot of solitary play time when the trex has to make its own fun. It likes to design playground equipment for itself. However, it usually gets its playgrounds shut down for safety violations. The parents might be right. No, they can't be.

Blipler



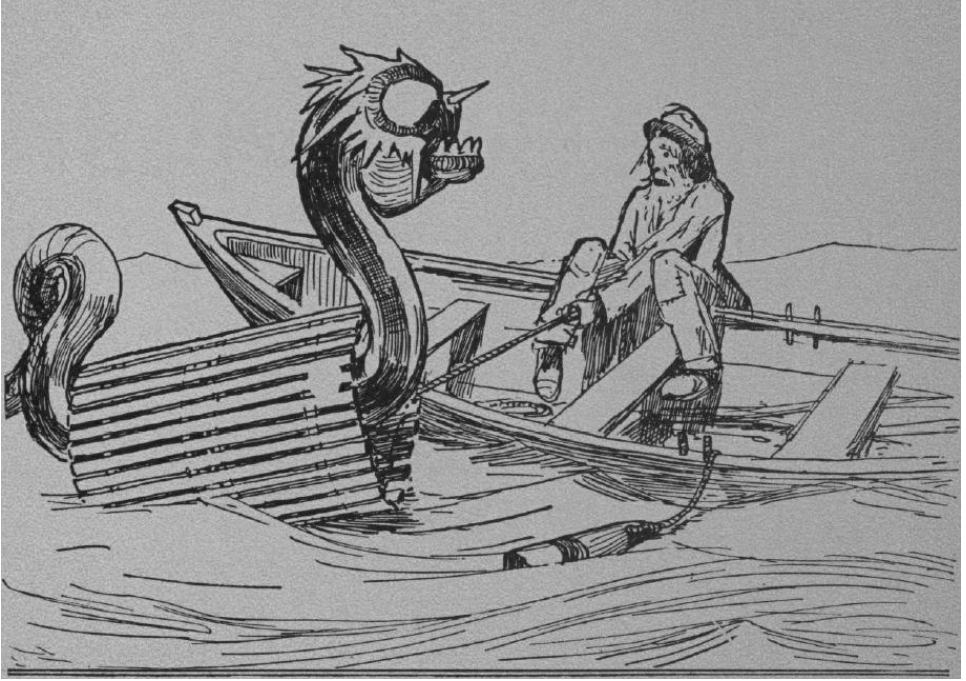
The blipler is a toothy beast that considers itself a bit of a gourmet. It can't crack an egg but is happy to boss you around regarding anything culinary.

Kolnikov



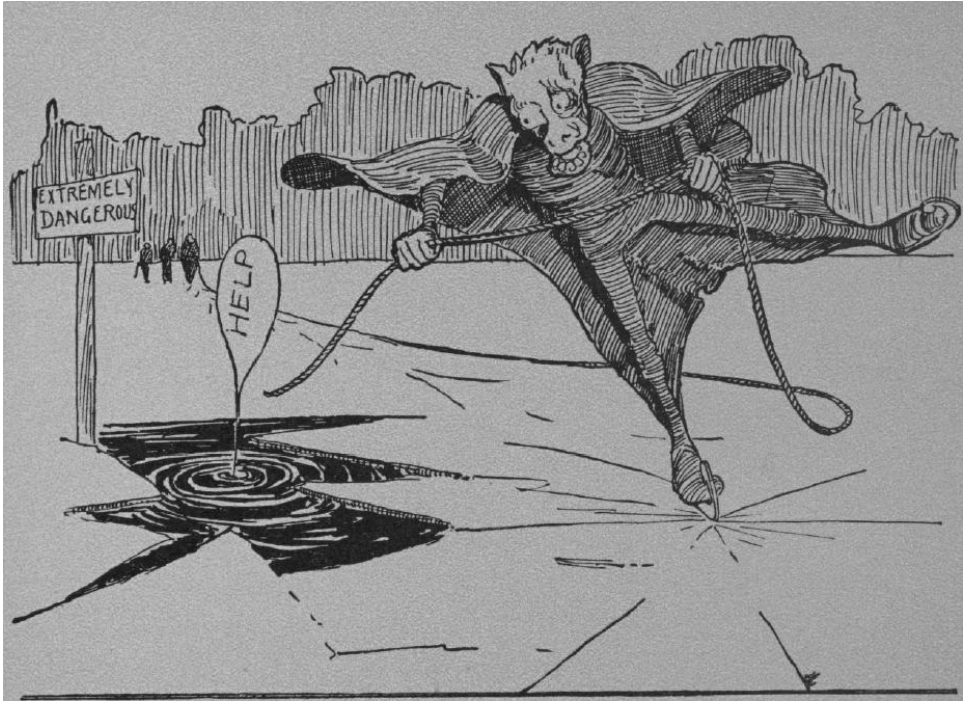
Much like the hamshoo, the kolnikov would like to be a boat. However, it sees itself as much more of the pirate type, going so far as to write itself a “Marauder’s Motto” that it has fixed in front of its eyes so it won’t forget it for a moment. Befriend one to find out what theirs is. Write a better one and maybe you’ll become its captain.

Strake



The strake finds traps to be very unsporting. Whatever animal you're attempting to slay, it believes you should have the decency to inform it ahead of time and let it choose the battleground. Of course, it doesn't hold itself to the same standards. It thinks you really should have seen it coming and it isn't its fault if you didn't. Gotta be ready.

Bringle



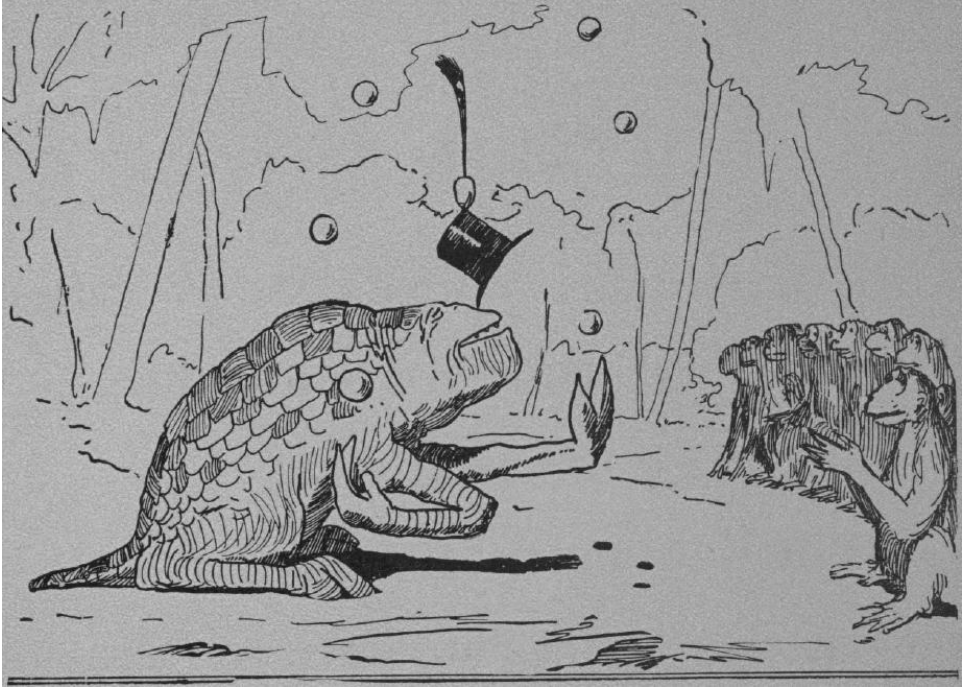
The bringle can fly but prefers to skate. It sees itself as the lifeguard of the ice. It's addicted to playing the hero so it will weaken the ice where people skate in order to rescue them when they break through. It is severely disliked by the zamdillo.

Zustra



Anywhere the zustra goes must be within smelling distance of the sea. It lives most of its life in solitude, shuttling from one coast to another in search of the perfect wave. A wave that is completely still as the universe drops away from and moves around it.

Dumhinger



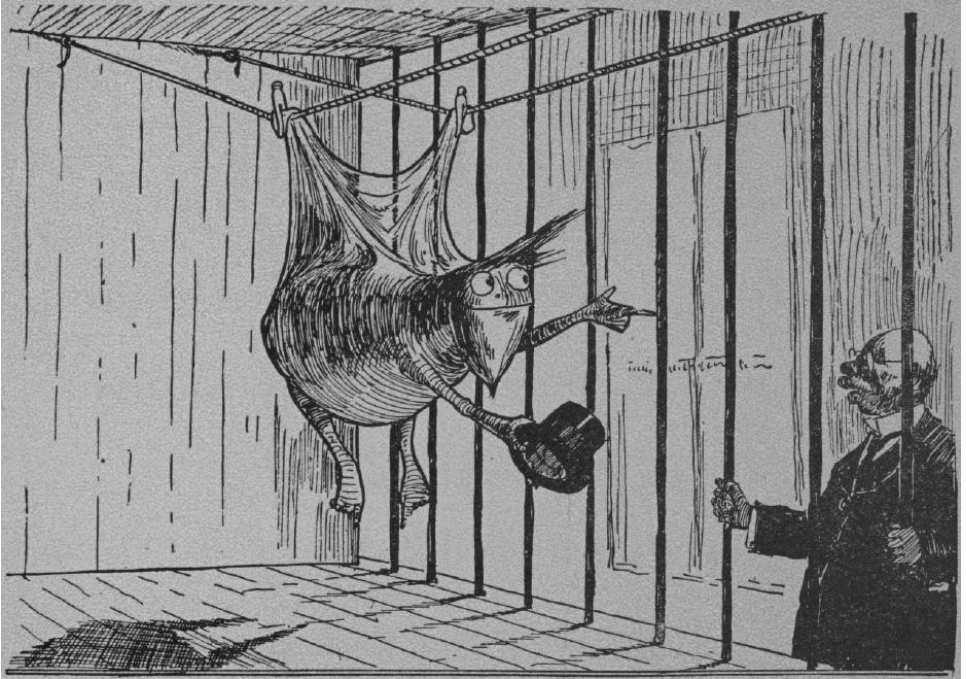
A natural performer, the dumhinger. As circuses go out of business it becomes more and more difficult for it to find meaningful employment. Its style of entertainment doesn't translate well to TV. It really needs its audience right in front of it. Poor thing. What'll it do?

Jifto



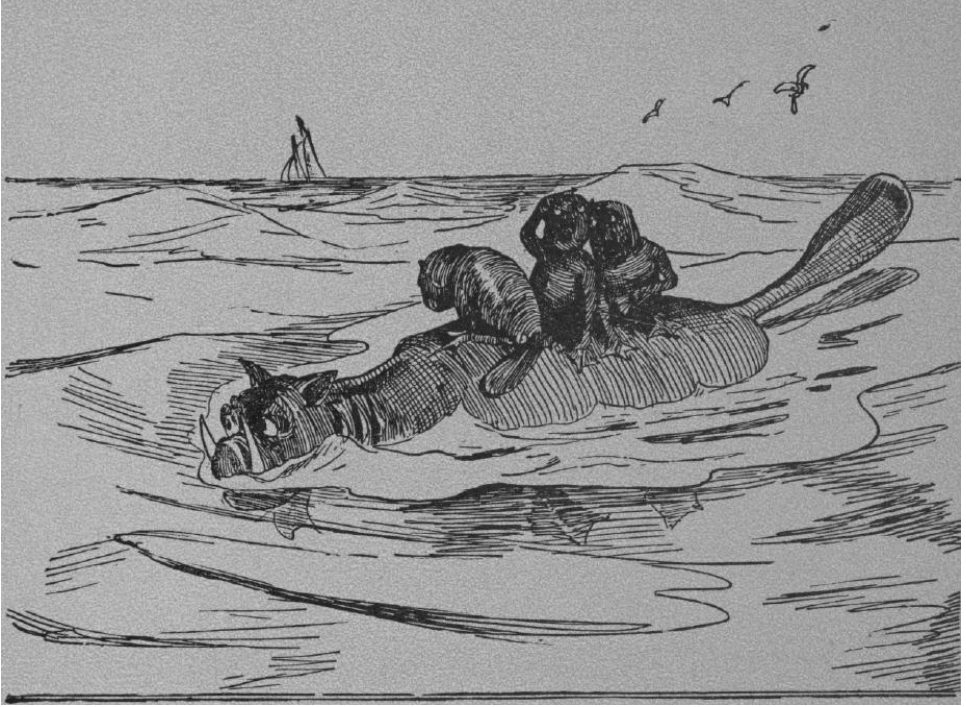
The jifto is a fierce ape-like beast. Given humanity's fear of ape/monkey-kind (we don't want equals, we want to be above), it's hard to imagine a place for it in the world. Ah, well... some things aren't meant to last.

Kumkpin



A thief of the highest order, the noble kumkpin will steal your heart as easily as your hat. And it spends a lot of time behind bars because of it. Love is tricky. But don't stop believing... Anyways, it also has a marvelous beard and a fear of lows so it avoids being on the ground as much as possible.

Bebruz



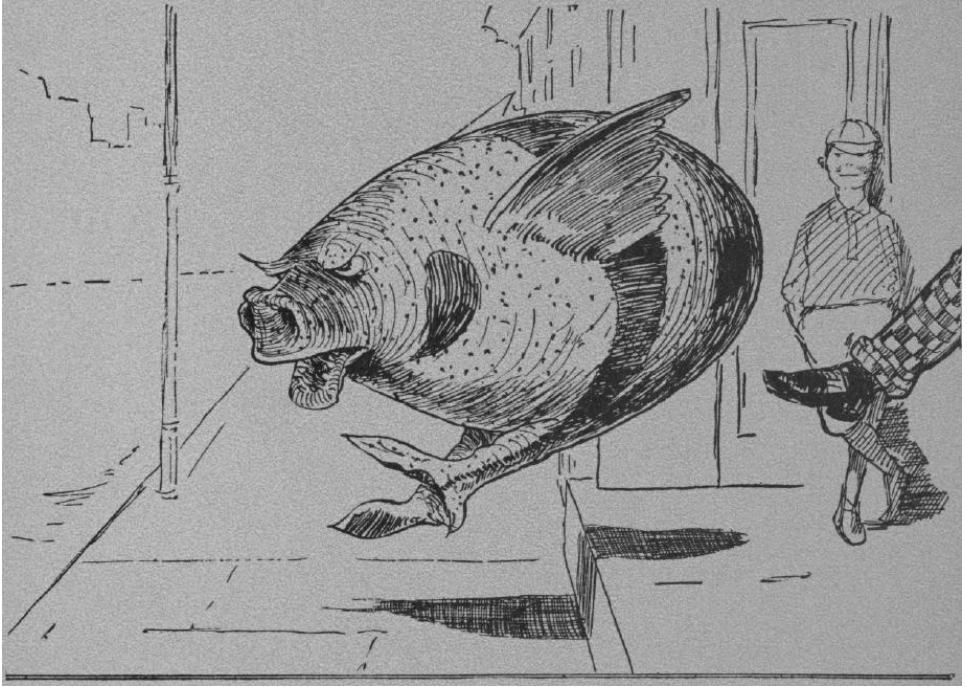
The bebruz is known as the king of the beavers and it dreams big, working tirelessly to dam the oceans. Its greatest success came a few thousand years ago when it succeeded in damming off the Great Lakes of North America from the Atlantic Ocean. It recruits the smaller true beavers to its work. However, as they are unaccustomed to the ocean's strength and impetuosity, they rarely last long before being swept away to distant shores.

Vyrm



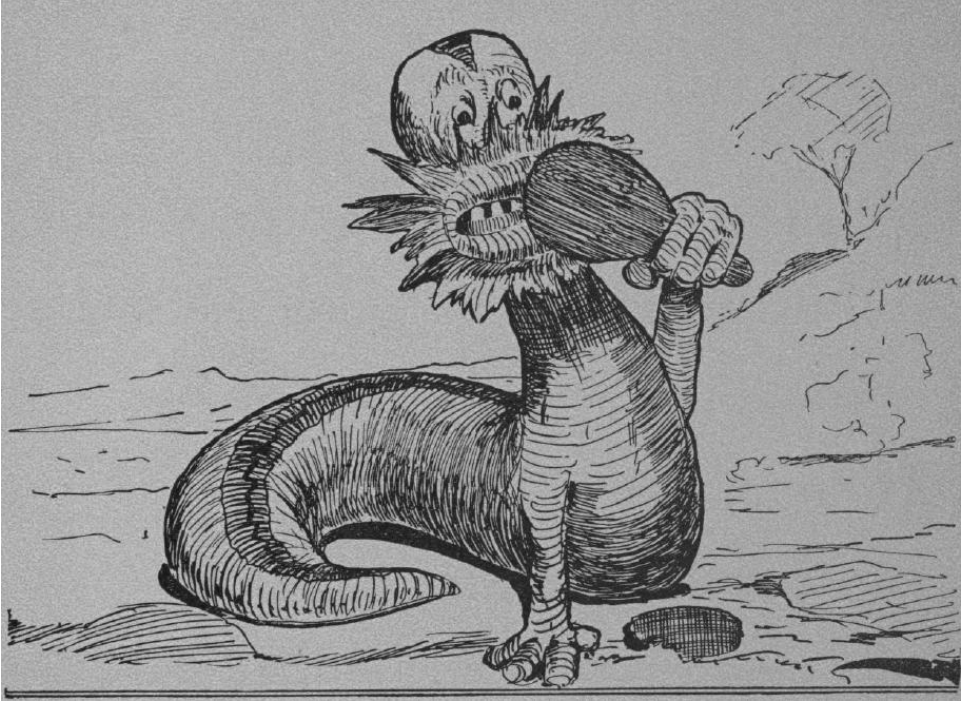
The vyrm is the guardian of worms. It is feared by the odddog. It lives in the dark underground but loves shiny things, tending to its gardens of gold. You might suppose that's the reason that an odddog will refuse to go near gold.

Snijen



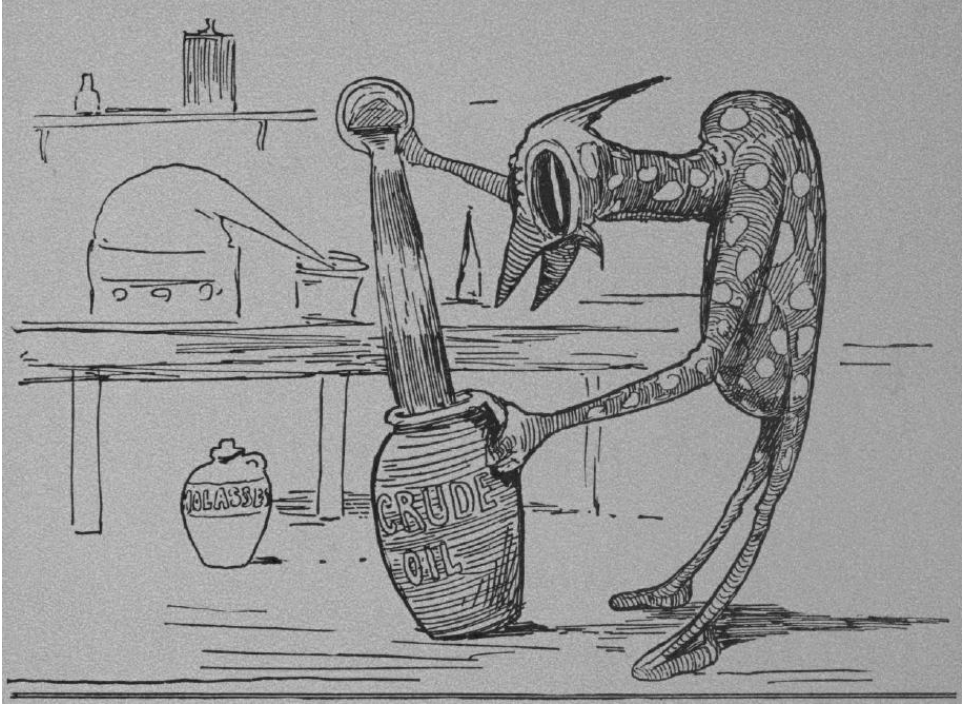
Ugly is how most describe the snijen. As with most ugly animals its unjust fate was to be either feared or hated. It ended up hated and is generally run out of any town it enters before the day is over. This has forced it into a nomadic lifestyle but it has found places to belong in society's nooks and crannies. It thrives in the classic niche of wandering bard. It travels telling enchanting tales in song to children who can be more judgmental than adults but are often less.

Soyce



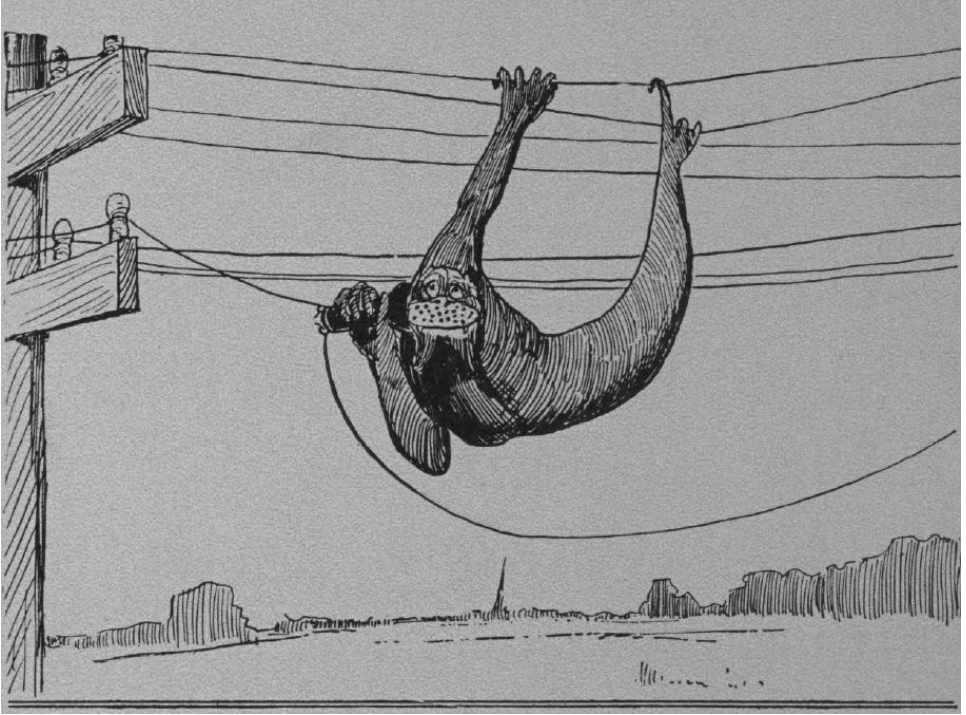
Seen here immediately after exiting its winter den, the soyce drowsily investigates its appearance after months of dormancy. It has grown an awkward beard and is down to only two legs. During hibernation its body consumes its legs to keep itself alive and warm. It is most often seen with four legs but may grow more and, during especially lean times, may be reduced to a slithering slug-like life.

Aksend



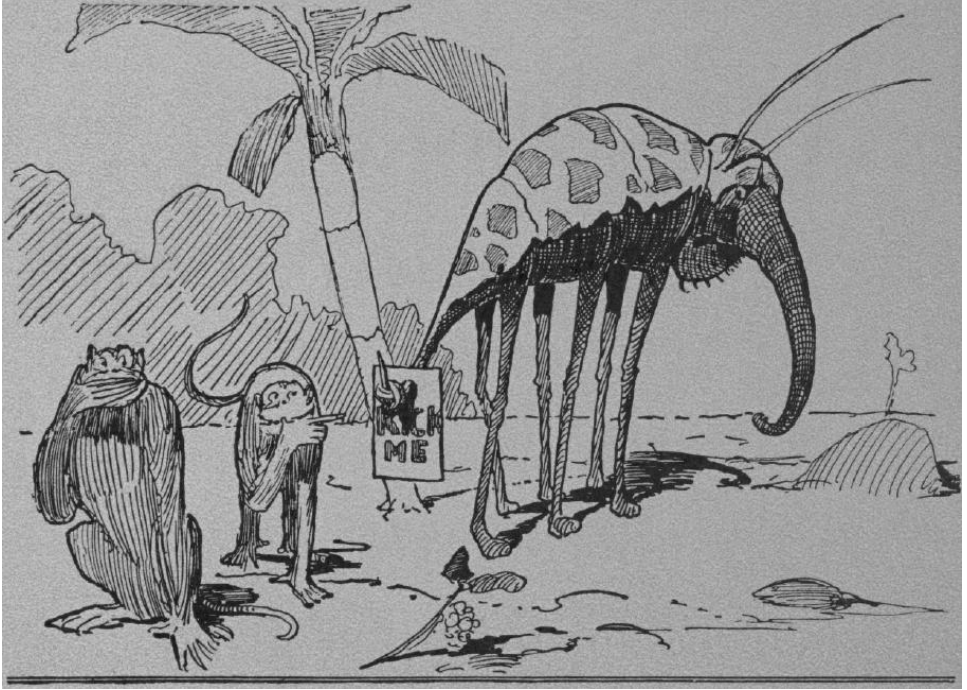
The aksend is a harmless critter (you can tell from its polka dots and large soulful eyes) that must be saved from itself. It seems entirely unaware of what its diet should be and will attempt to eat anything – pebbles, crude oil, fruitcake, etc.

Platastein



The platastein is an urban sloth that has adapted so well to human encroachment that it is able to feed directly on electricity. When your lights flicker for seemingly no reason you may well have one of these outside clinging to your power lines.

Vampittle



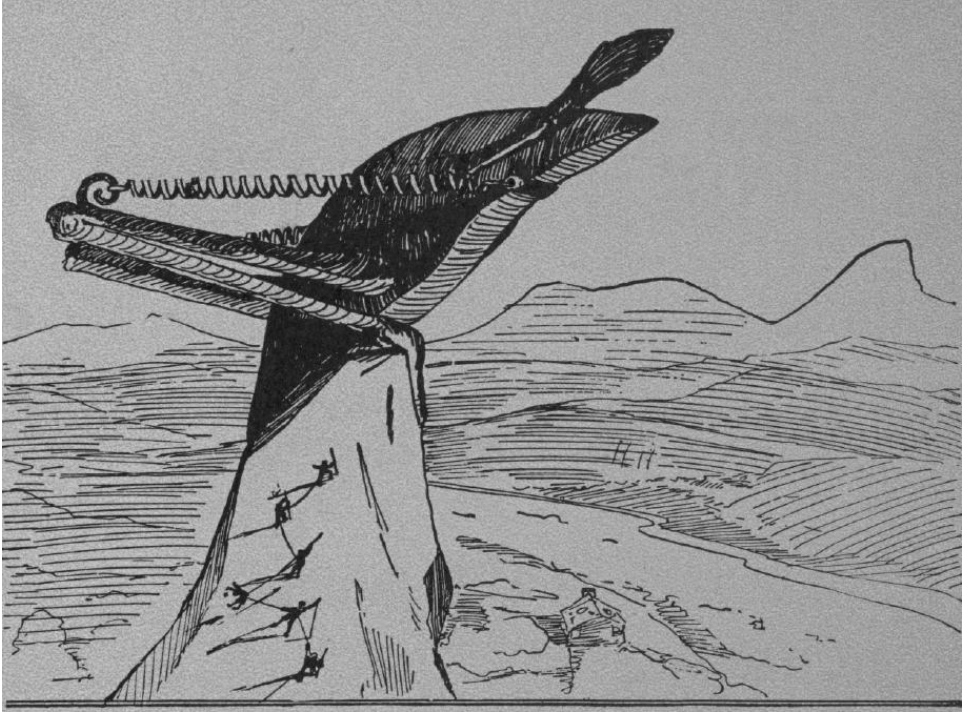
A sad bug, the vampittle is unkindly mocked by other animals for its bugginess. The male is much smaller (about the size of a mosquito) and feeds on nectar, dandruff and overripe fruits. The larger female (pictured here) requires a substantial blood meal before laying its eggs. Because there are so few animals large enough to survive such an enormous loss of blood there has been a big push for them to move towards vegetarianism. Sap isn't nearly as filling so it often takes a small grove of trees to satisfy.

Shiggle



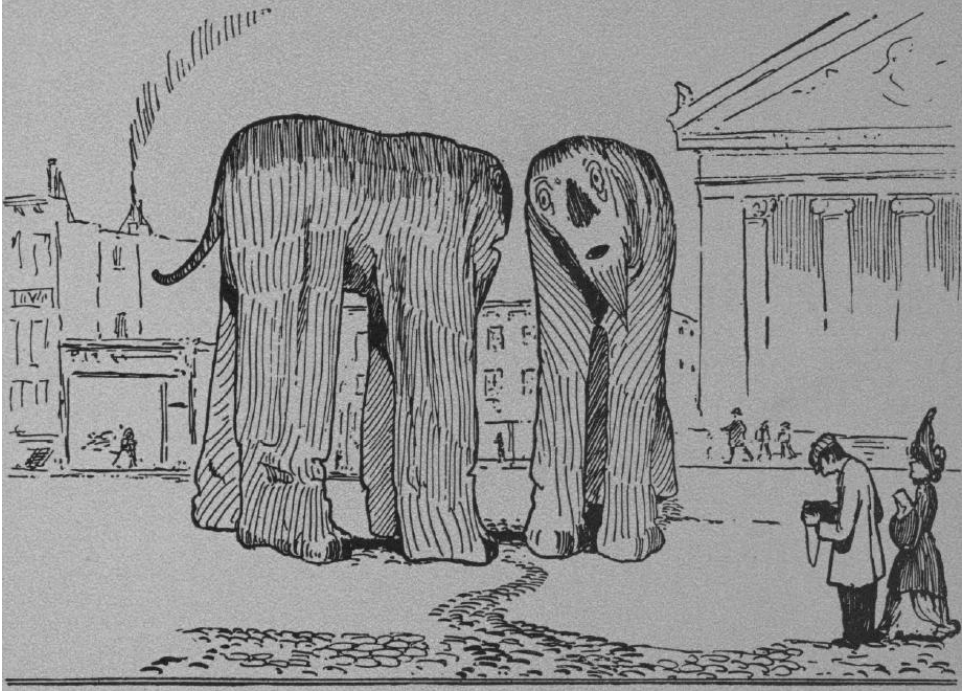
The shiggle has confused a great many scientists for a long time. In the end, its genetic makeup was found to be half flowering shrub and half bonfire. It's beautiful but frightening.

Thumwumper



The thumwumper is a mountaintop dweller, incapable of surviving any lower than at the very peak. Once its peak is completely grazed it must launch itself to the next in an unforgiving example of survival of the fittest (or luckiest). It immediately dies of shame if it doesn't land directly on a peak or is knocked off of it. Truly a brutal existence.

Rumble Rumkin



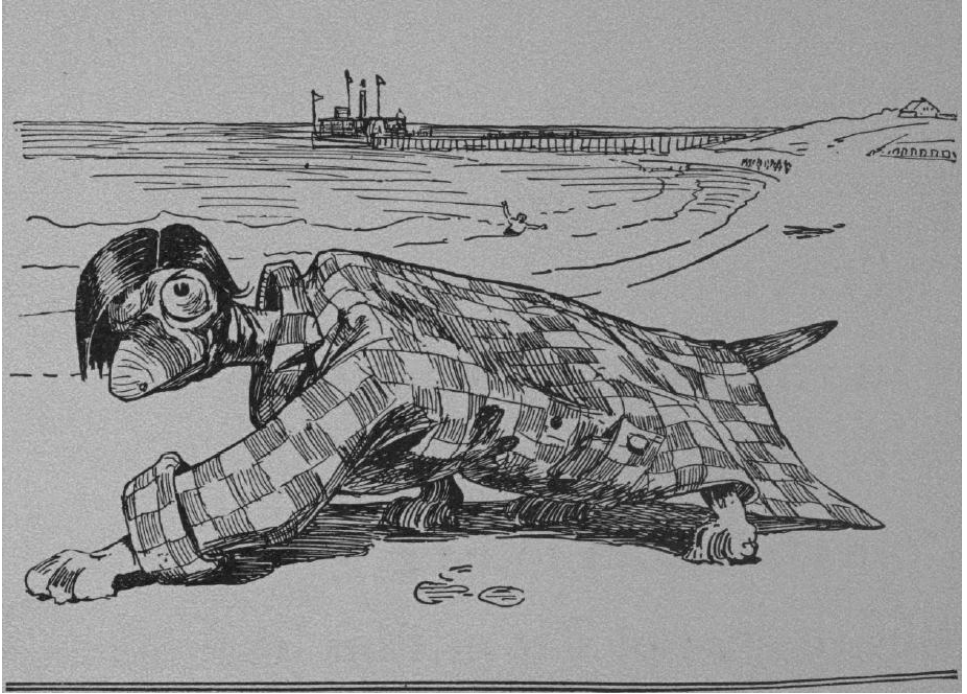
As with many large beasts, the rumble rumkin believes itself to be much smaller than it is. It can't quite fit in with us smaller creatures the way it imagines. It has broken a great many chairs, doorways and even bridges.

Slobberwocky



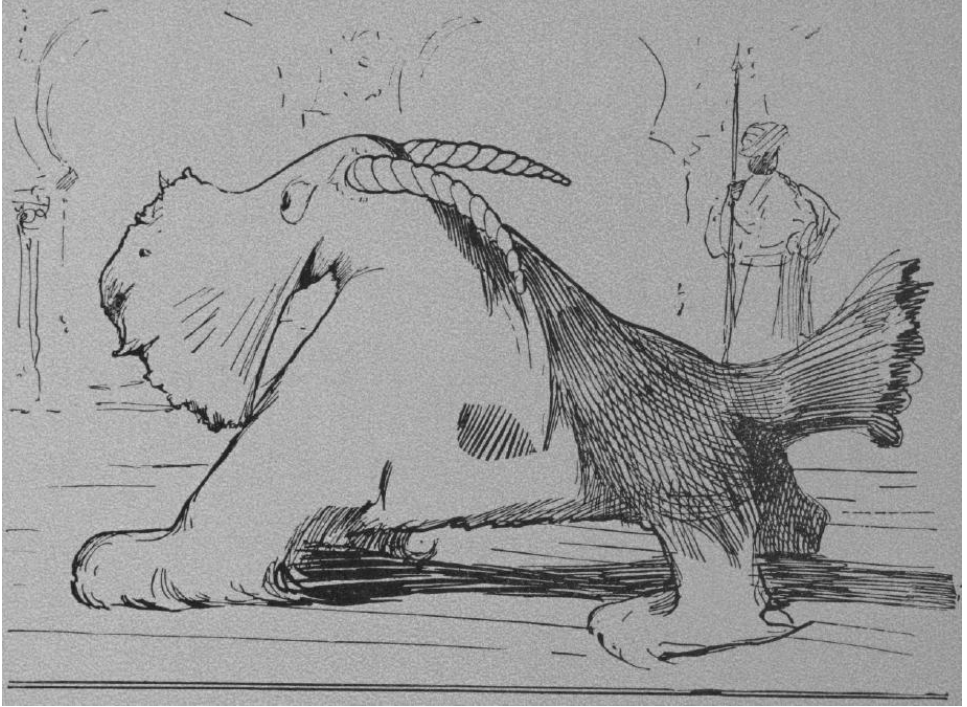
The slobberwocky has been hunted to the edge of extinction for the potent poison produced by its salivary glands that it coats itself with as a defense mechanism. This poison has been long used on weapons, in medicine and is now an essential ingredient in many processed foods. Its numbers have rebounded thanks to conservation efforts and its own realization that it could harvest the secretions and become quite wealthy itself.

Blankt



A true trendsetter (maybe not, but it's certainly not following trends), the blankt combs the beach to find inspiration for its next look. Sometimes these are big hits, such as the shell shark chiffon. Other times they're a bit less notable but it does its best. The sea gives what it gives.

Chog

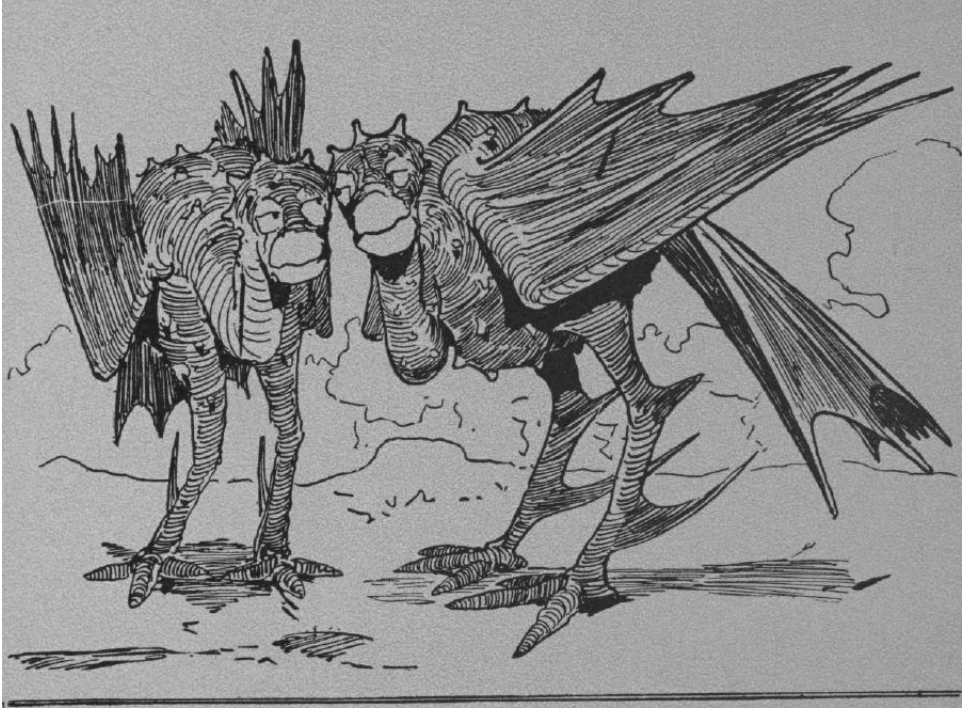


The chog is found in both hot, dry deserts and freezing, snowy regions. Its thick coat insulates and protects it against extreme environments. It has a stocky physique which helps keep it well anchored to the ground. This is important because it hunts the wind. All attempts at domestication have failed.

Infinipede

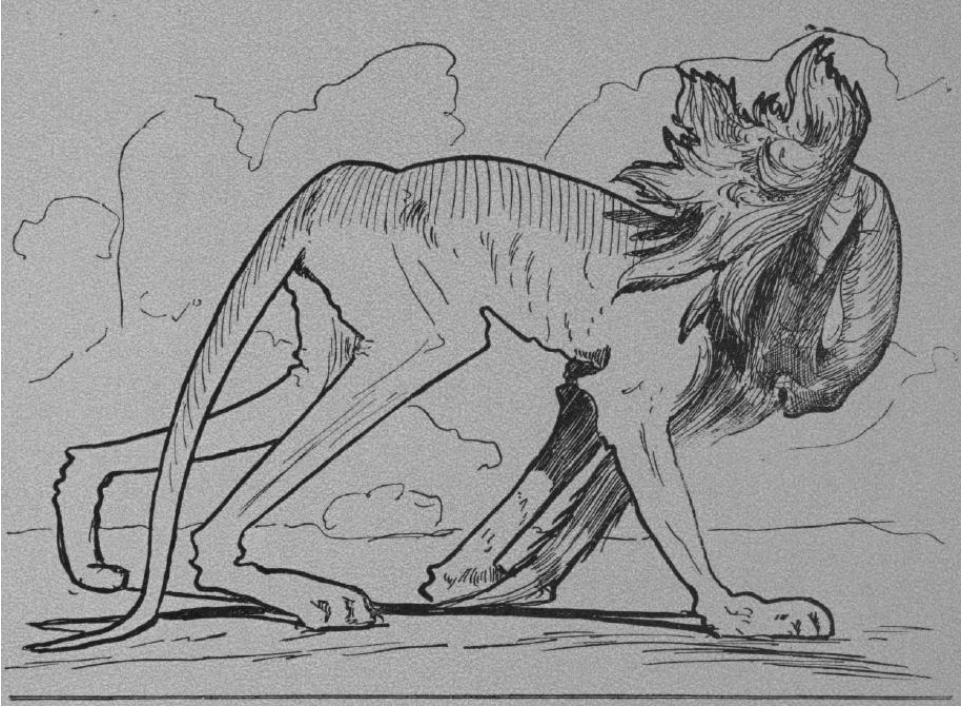


Sections of the infinipede have been studied but a full anatomical chart has never been completed. We just don't have enough paper. It once swam in three different oceans at the same time. Scientists are able to study the same creature simultaneously all across the world. All of this is to say that it's really long.



The _____ keeps secrets and has no name. Once something IS it can't be a secret. They keep track of all the things that aren't. While many beasts would like to prey on them none have been successful. Of course, nearly nothing is known about them.

Revilo



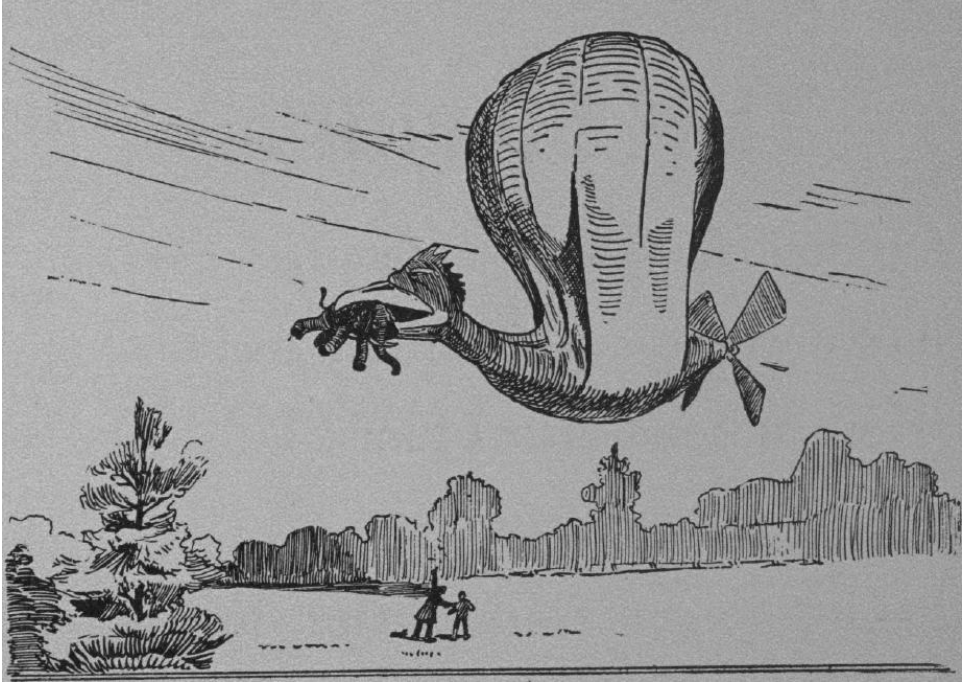
The revilo is lion-like in appearance but not in spirit. It slinks from one underworld to another in search of enlightened souls that it thinks might help it reach enlightenment as well. It pessimistically believes that it won't find any enlightened ones among the living, though it still thinks that it could achieve it. As such, it's not much of a listener and is pretty closed off.

Qwisqr



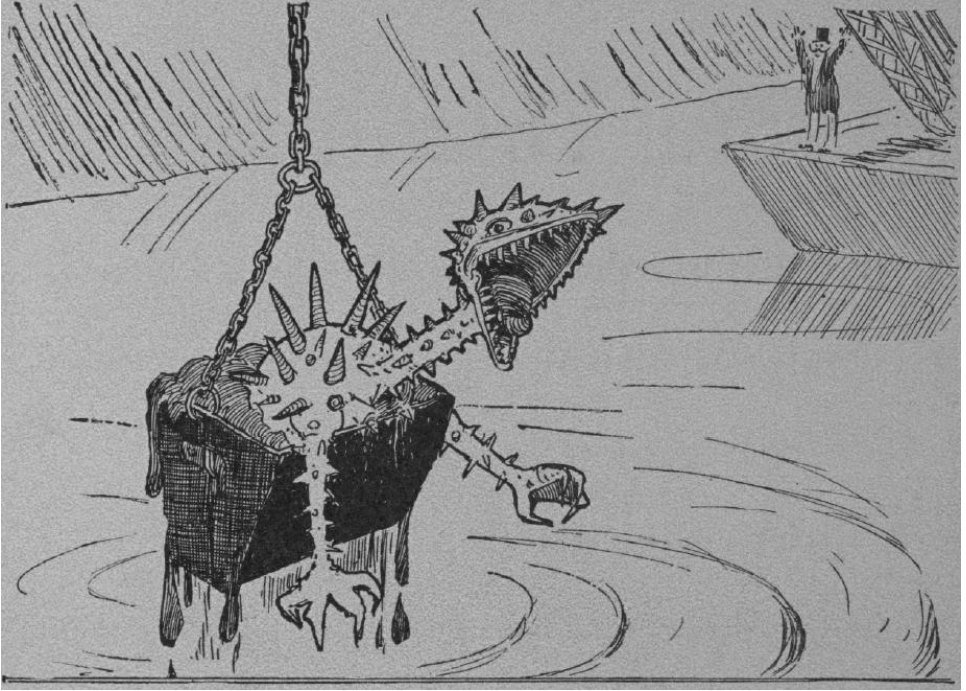
We're all silly sometimes. The qwisqr is silly most times. It loves the inspiration of a challenge and so it will go far out of its way to get itself stuck in traps. One was once observed calmly escaping a hanging cage with half a leaf and a phlegmy cough.

Temperst



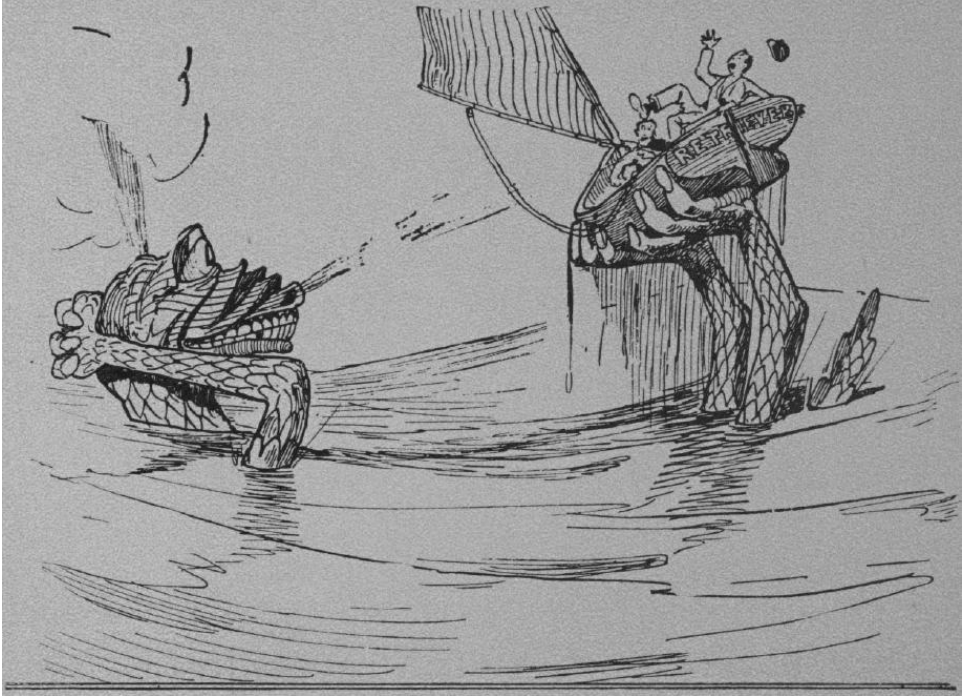
The temperst pilots clouds and directs lightning. It's not terribly friendly towards land-dwellers, looking down on them in both senses. Its only predator is the tall mountain.

Yevsky



The yevsky is the unpleasant cousin of the gogol. It normally lives in ponds, rivers and lakes down in the muck, though a few do venture out to sea and are sometimes mistaken for ugly mermaids. Their diet consists of toads, unlucky pennies and the occasional human toe.

Kaf



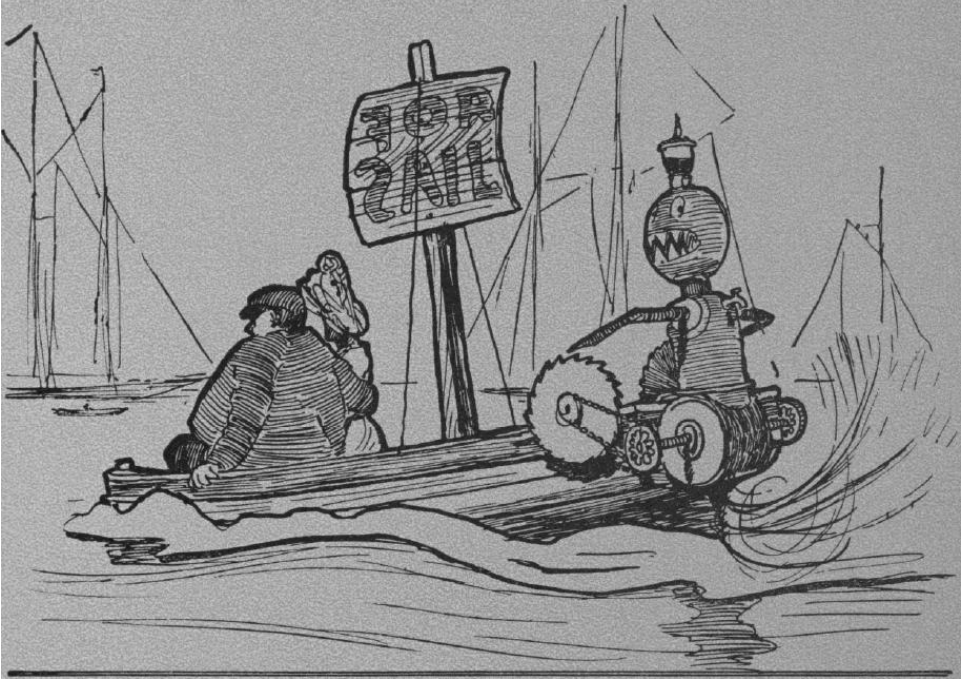
A wonderfully playful sea beast, the kaf is another large animal that doesn't fully appreciate how much bigger it is than most creatures. It wrestles ghost ships and tsunamis for fun. It is glad to help rescue a sinking boat but will just as often sink one unintentionally. It's a good thing it lives in the ocean because the world's just not built to its size.

Claptrap



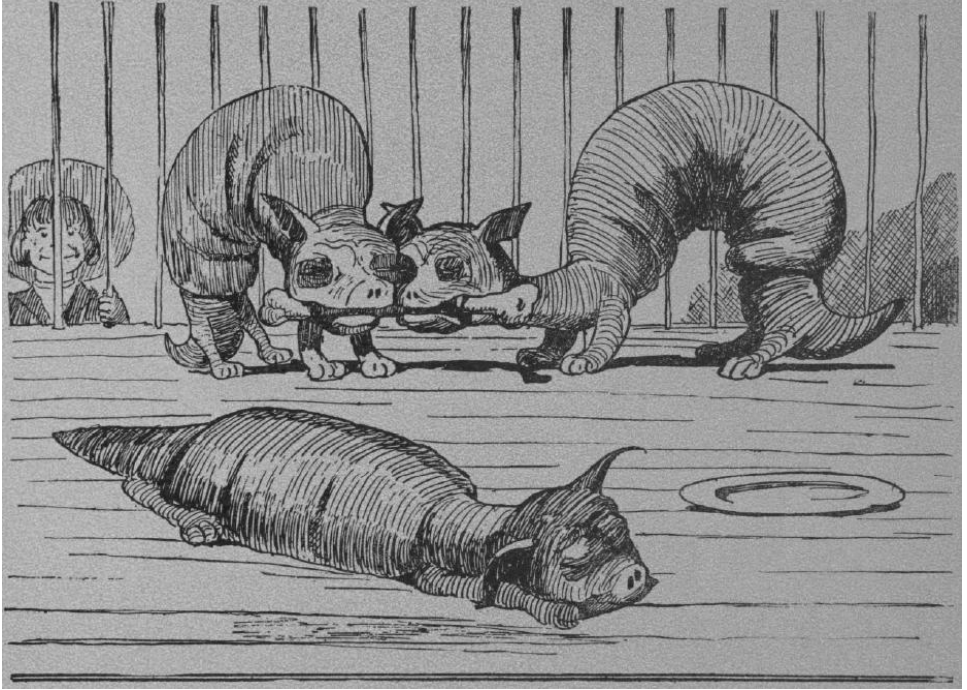
A rare hunter of the plant world, the claptrap is the mature adult form of the venus fly trap. It can hear a fly buzzing at 300 miles but doesn't pick up much else, which is fine because it isn't interested in much else. It has a very intense focus on flies and the rest of the world is just a fly incubator (though it does thank you for your service).

Qrung



The grung is a machine that learned how to love, making it both deserving of empathy and dangerous. The recipient of its affections is the sea and its feelings are not returned. Even so, it persists, forever wandering the waves, at times ferrying others to earn its oil but generally just afloat.

Sheppple



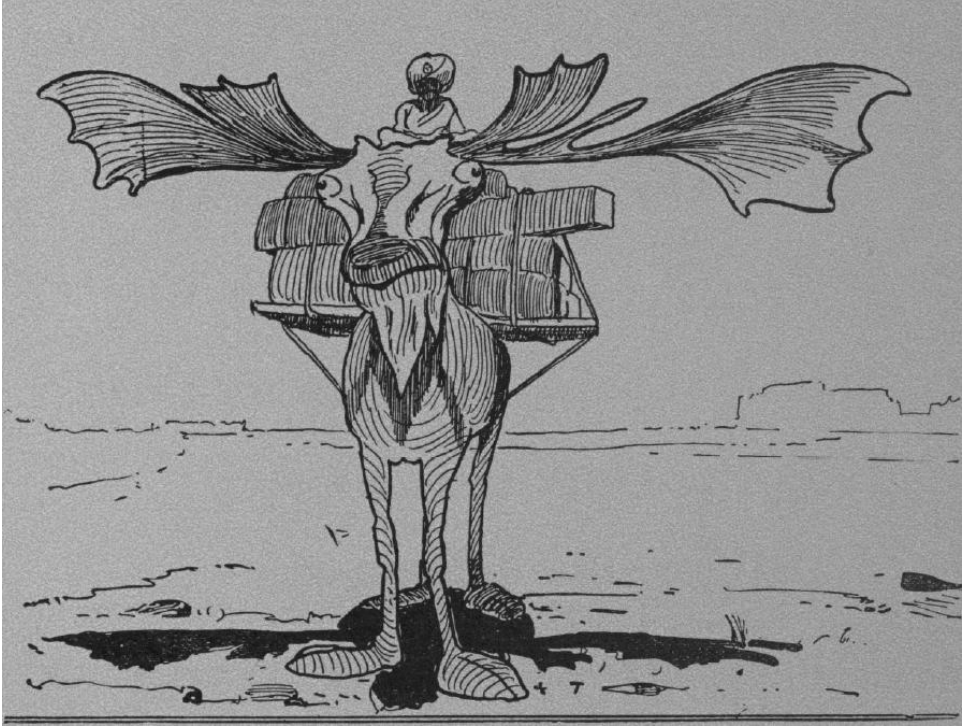
Unsurprisingly, the sheppple no longer exists in the wild. Nature didn't really see the point. However, with nothing required of them and being fed regular meals they thrive well enough in captivity. Do you want one? No one else does.

Delear



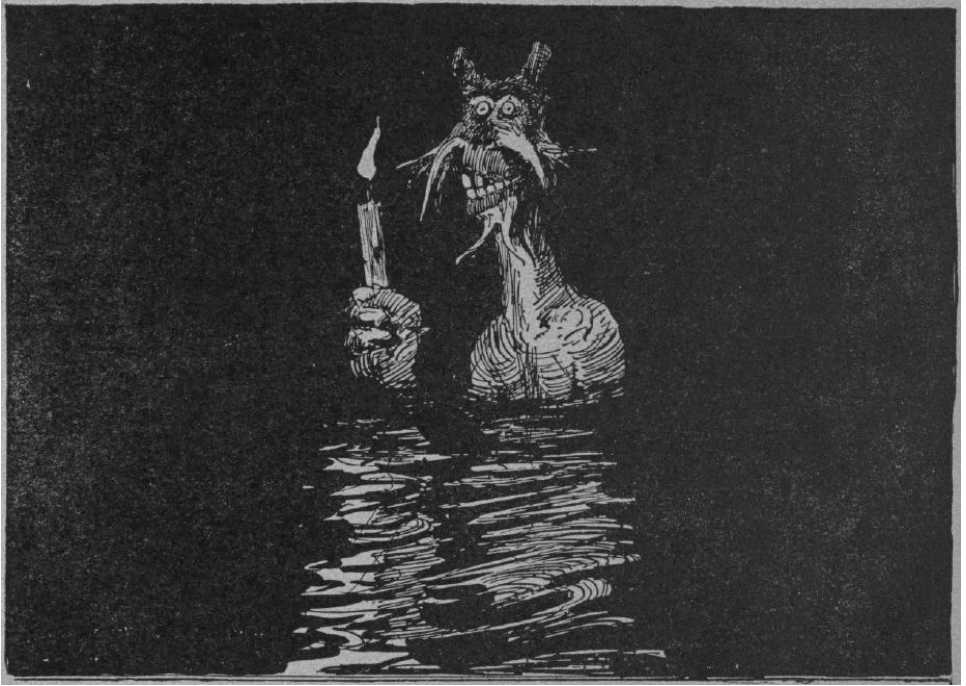
The delear is a big fan of automobiles. It lives for cars and is almost as much of a gearhead as the grung. It designs and builds its own vehicles but hasn't figured out internal combustion just yet so it only really goes down hills. Maybe you would help it push its car to the top of the next one?

Moose



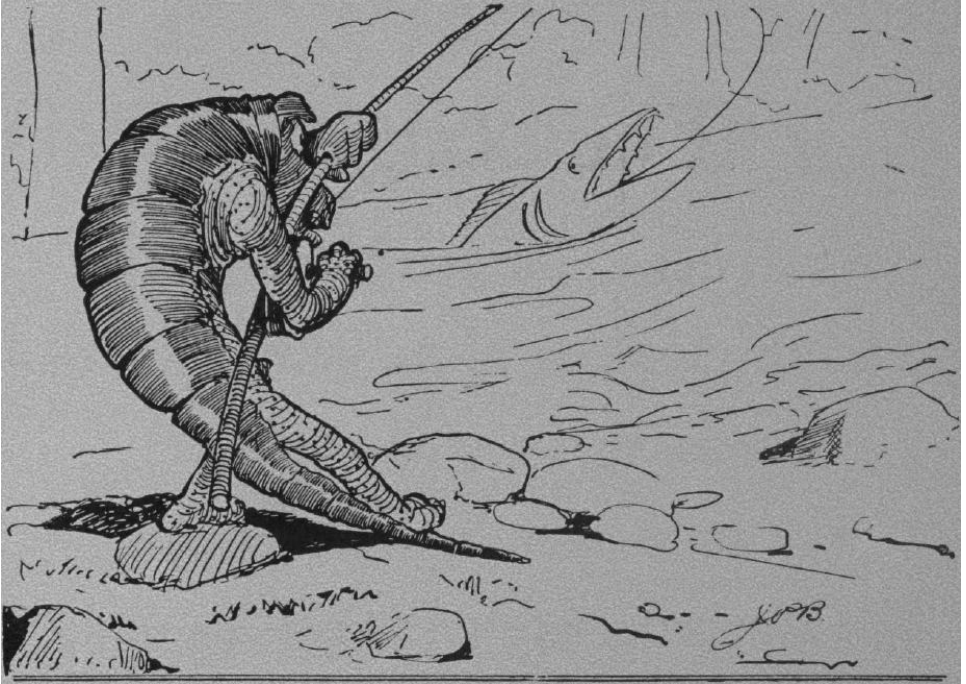
The moose is likely the best known of all the beasts noted here so we don't need to discuss it much. It's a large ungulate.

Bermudeeze



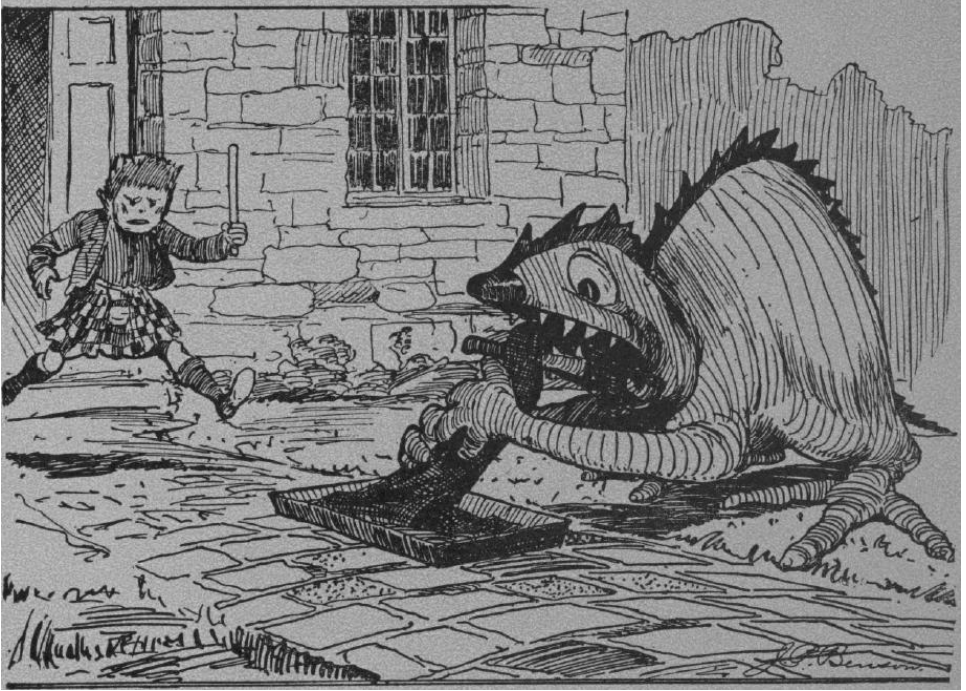
The deepest desire of the bermudeeze is to one day grow up and be a lighthouse. As such, it drifts from place to place with its candle, howling into the darkness in order to inform ships that there is a lighthouse trainee in their midst. It yearns for attention, creates confusion on boats about their location and occasionally causes a shipwreck.

Grimp



The big one always gets away from the grimp.

Carroon

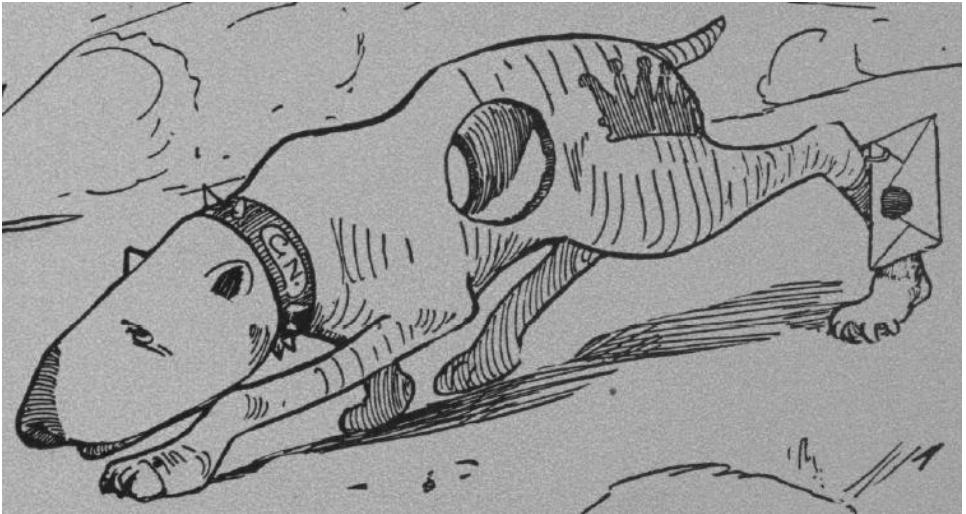


The carroon can't stay out of trouble. Who can? The difference is that it has adapted to feed off of the very essence of trouble, finding itself a very rich niche. Indeed, other beasts (me included) have begun eyeing it as well. It looks like there will be plenty to go around.



About the Beastly Artists

(Sir) Kyle Mosher humbly awaits a knighthood for his work with beasts. A Nobel Prize would also be acceptable. Peace or physics is fine. Both would be great and, I think we all agree, well earned. Find more of his work at: lifemagicmischief.com



John Prentiss Benson (1865-1947) was mostly an architect and a painter of boats. However, in 1904 he had a comic strip published in newspapers that consisted of illustrated beasts and limericks to go with them. These were *The Woogzebeasts*. A collection was published in 1905 by Moffat, Yard & Co. The illustrations for *Beasts Without Borders* come from a digital scan of that book provided by the U.S. Library of Congress.